

Weekly Fire Weather / Fire Danger Outlook

Wednesday 12 May to Friday 21 May 2004

Eastern Great Basin Predictive Services
ISSUED Tuesday 11 May 2004

Weather Discussion

Last Week: A strong ridge of high pressure covered the southwestern U.S. last week, pushing clouds and slightly cooler than normal temperatures northward to the Idaho/Western Wyoming area. Utah and the Arizona Strip, by contrast, experienced temperatures that averaged 15 degrees above normal with little, if any, clouds. Very low relative humidities (several areas below 10% RH at times) and occasional strong winds created near Red Flag conditions for most of the week. In fact, a Red Flag Warning was issued for southern and eastern Utah and the Arizona Strip on Monday May 10th as a mostly dry cold front swept through the Great Basin. This cold front produced gusts above 70 mph and led to a variety of damage to property, as well as at least one fire from arcing powerlines. It also closed parts of Highway 80 due to blowing dust.

Next Week: A deep trough of low pressure is swinging through Idaho, Wyoming and northern Utah with rainshowers, snowshowers, gusty winds and much cooler temperatures. This trough will move eastward Thursday (13 May), with lighter winds, clearing skies and warming temperatures in its wake. Friday through the weekend (14-16 May) will be warm and sunny with light winds, but minimum daily relative humidities will stay relatively high (generally above 20%, even for the Arizona Strip). Clouds, showers and windy conditions will return early next week to Idaho, Wyoming and northern Utah as another deep trough of low pressure moves in from the west. Most of next week (17-20 May) looks to be on the cool and unsettled side, with Wednesday (19 May) the wettest as the low drops into southern Utah.

10-Day Forecast

Idaho/Western Wyoming: *Payette, Central Idaho, Boise, South Idaho, East Idaho, Bridger-Teton Dispatch Areas*

| Day/Date | Fire Danger | Weather |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Wed - Thur (12-13 May) | Low | Cloudy and cold with showers. West winds 10-20 mph with gusts to 35 mph. |
| Fri - Sun (14-16 May) | Low | Warming to near normal with decreased chance of showers. Breezy southwest to northwest winds 10-20 mph. |
| Mon - Thur (17-20 May) | Low | Cloudy with a couple of periods of heavy rain. |

Northern Utah: *Northern Utah, Uintah Basin Dispatch Areas*

| Day/Date | Fire Danger | Weather |
|----------|-------------|---------|
|----------|-------------|---------|

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|----------------------------------|-----|---|
| Wed - Thur (12-13 May) | Low | Cloudy and cold with showers. West to northwest winds 10-20 mph with few higher gusts. |
| Fri - Sun (14-16 May) | Low | Warming to above normal temps and clearing skies. Southwest winds 5-15 mph, increasing late Sunday. |
| Mon - Thur (17-20 May) | Low | Cloudy with scattered rainshowers and cool temps. Southwest winds 12-25 mph. |

Southern Utah/Arizona Strip: Richfield, Cedar City, Moab Dispatch Areas

| Day/Date | Fire Danger | Weather |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Wed - Thur (12-13 May) | Low - Mod | Cloudy breezy with cooler temps. Southwest winds 5-15 mph. Increasing RH with good overnight recovery. |
| Fri - Sun (14-16 May) | Low - Mod | Warming again with mostly clear skies but RH staying moderately high (daily minimums above 20%). Increasing southwest to west winds Sunday. |
| Mon - Thur (17-20 May) | Low | Slightly cooler and breezy with partly cloudy skies. |

Fuels Discussion

Green-up is still occurring through most of the Eastern Great Basin Dispatch areas. Sage, brush, and fine fuels are continuing to green up. There had been some curing of fine fuels occurring in southern Utah this past week. However, with the storm system that moved through at the beginning of the week (10-11 May), humidity has risen and should slow this curing process. The probability for fire starts is low to moderate, due to green-up activity in the lower elevations. The weather forecast is calling for breezy winds and cool temperatures with a good chance of rain and snow for Idaho, Wyoming and northern/central Utah. 1000-hour fuels at this time are still showing poor recovery with centers reporting levels at only 10-15%, (10% being in exposed areas). There was some RX activity over the weekend, but with the high wind forecast the burning has come to a halt for the time being, until prescriptions can be met again. There will be a slight chance of human caused fires just below the snow line, where green-up hasn't yet occurred and live fuel moistures are low due to dormancy.

Resources: Resources within Eastern Great Basin will be sufficient to handle light initial attack activity. Extended attack and large fire activity would require requests for resources outside Eastern Great Basin.

Fire Danger Map (next page):

